

## ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1909

## THE WITCH'S CURSE.

A GLOOMY OLD LEGEND OF THE TOWN OF BUCKSPORT, ME.

The Imprecations and Prophecy of the Condemned Woman on the Scaffold Recalled by a Strange Blotch on Col. Buck's Tombstone.

Close by the country road on the outskirts of the sleepy old seaport town of Buckport, on the Penobscot, down in Maine, is a small family cemetery. Within the inclosure, with its high iron fence, in the quiet and almost gloomy shade, sleep the Bucks, the blue-blooded and aristocratic clan which first settled the town and bequeathed it their name—and a legend.

Of the many moss grown tablets and monuments the largest and most conspicuous is a tall granite shaft in plain sight of the highway. On one side is the inscription:

## COL. JOHN BUCK.

The Founder of Buckport.

A. D. 1792.

Born in Haverhill, Mass., 1718.

Died March 18, 1793.

On the other side is the single word "Buck," and also something not wrought by the marble worker. On the smooth surface of the pedestal is a curious outline, irregular and describing that which can easily be imagined to be the form of a foot of normal size. Some people say that it is a foot, but those are of the superstitious town folk who believe the legend which has been choice stock in Buckport for many years.

They that delight in perpetuating this story say that Colonel Jonathan Buck was a very stern and harsh man and the leading spirit of his day and generation. His word was law in the community. He was the highest in civil authority and his decision as immovable as the granite hills that loom up in the haze of the northern horizon.

He was most Puritanical, and to him witchcraft was the incarnation of blasphemy. Thus, so the story goes, when a certain woman was accused of witchcraft, at the first clamorings of the populace Colonel Buck ordered her to be imprisoned, and later, after a mere form of a hearing, she was sentenced to be executed as a witch. She pleaded to Buck for her life, but as to a heart of stone.

The day of the execution came and the condemned woman went to the gallows cursing her judge with such terrible imprecations that the people shuddered, but the magistrate stood unmoved and made a sign to the officers to hasten the arrangements. All was ready and the hangman was about to perform his gruesome duty when the woman turned to Colonel Buck and raising one hand to heaven as if to direct her last words on earth pronounced this astounding prophecy:

"Jonathan Buck, listen to these words, the last my tongue shall utter. It is the spirit of the only true and living God which bids me speak them to you. You will soon die. Over your grave they will erect a stone, that all may know where your bones are crumbling into dust. But listen! Upon that stone the imprint of my feet will appear, and for all time, long after your accursed race has perished from the face of the earth, will the people from far and near know that you murdered a woman. Remember well, Jonathan Buck, remember well!"

Then she turned to her executioners and another act, one of the forever ineffaceable blots, was made a part of American colonial history.

The "witch's curse," as it was called, and is to this day, was almost forgotten until many years afterward, when the monument was erected to the memory of Buckport's founder. It had been in position hardly a month when a faint outline was discovered upon it. This gradually grew more and more distinct until some one made the startling discovery that it was the outline of a foot which some supernatural draftsman had traced on the granite. The old legend was revived and the Buck cemetery was for years the Mecca of the superstitious and curious for miles around. The "witch's curse" had been fulfilled, they said. An attempt was made to remove the stain, but all efforts tended only to bring the outline out in bolder relief. The stain or whatever it was seemed to penetrate to the very center of the stone.

The hinges of the big gate have been created for the last time to admit a Buck. The last of the race has been laid to rest beneath the oaks and maples, and the setting sun throws the shadow of the once mighty Colonel Jonathan Buck's monument athwart the double row of mossy mounds, as if still exerting his authority, and the same rays light that mysterious tracing held up to the view of all that pass and repass along the dusty turnpike.

The imprint of the foot is a fact, and is there today as plain as ever. The legend of the "witch's curse" may or may not be a fact. The fanciful legend, but the practical point on the apparent discrepancy between the dates of the era of witchcraft persecution and the regime of Colonel Buck. They say that the stain is simply an accidental fault in the granite, and that the legend was made to fit the foot and not the foot the legend. But the foot is there—Philadelphia Inquirer.

An Honest Medicine for La Grippe. George W. Waitt, of South Gardiner, Me., says: "I have had the worst cold, cough, chills and grippe and have taken lots of trash of no account but profit to the vendor. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is the only thing that has done any good whatever. I have used one 50 cent bottle and the chills, cold and grippe have all left me. I congratulate the manufacturers of an honest medicine." For sale by J. H. Janney, Druggist, 701 King St.

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Mardi Gras Carnivals, New Orleans, Mobile, and Birmingham.

For the above occasions the Southern Railway will sell tickets to the points named at one fare for the round trip. Tickets on sale February 7 to 13, inclusive; final limit Feb. 25. Double daily fast trains, carrying Pullman sleeping and dining cars.

Mardi Gras Festivities, Birmingham.

For the above occasion the Southern Railway will sell tickets from all points on its line to Birmingham, Ala., and return at one fare for the round trip. Tickets on sale February 7 to 13, inclusive; final limit Feb. 25. Double daily fast trains daily for Birmingham, carrying Pullman sleeping cars, day coaches and dining cars.

To Charlottesville and Return.

For the occasion of the State convention, B. Y. P. U., at Charlottesville, Va., February 21 and 22, the Southern Railway will sell tickets from points in Virginia and Washington, D. C., to Charlottesville, and return at greatly reduced rates. Tickets on sale February 19 to 21, inclusive; final limit February 27.

Through Sleeping Car to Aiken and Augusta, Ga.—Southern Railway.

Beginning Monday, January 30, the New York and Aiken sleeper on the Florida limited, leaving Washington at 5:50 p. m. week days, will be operated to Augusta, and the New York and Augusta sleeper on the Washington and Southwestern limited, leaving Washington at 10:45 p. m. daily, will be operated to Aiken.

Sleeping Car Service to Miami, Fla.—Southern Railway.

Beginning January 30, the Pullman sleeping car now operated between New York and Jacksonville on the United States Fast Mail leaving Washington at 11:15 a. m. daily, will be extended to Miami, Fla., where seasonal connections are made with steamers for Havana and tri-weekly connection for Nassau and Key West.

Mardi Gras, New Orleans, Feb. 14.

For the above occasion the Southern Railway Company will sell tickets to New Orleans at one fare for the round trip which from Washington will be \$27.50; tickets on sale February 7 to 13, inclusive; final limit February 25. Double daily fast trains leave Washington 11:15 a. m. and 10:45 p. m. Through sleepers and dining car service.

Opening and Closing of the Mails.

Northern mails, week days, close at 7:30 and 11:45 a. m. and 2:50, 5:50, 8:30, 12:00 p. m. Open at 8:00 a. m., 12:00 m. and 5:00 p. m. On Sundays Northern mails close at 11:14 a. m. and 7:20 p. m.

Southern mails via Charlottesville, close at 7:50 and 10:55 a. m. and 2:15 and 8:10 p. m. Open at 8:00 a. m. and 2:30 and 8:40 p. m.

Southern mails via Richmond, close at 10:20 a. m. and 3:13 and 8:30 p. m.

Manassas Division mails close at 7:50 a. m. and 3:45 p. m. Open at 11 p. m.

Alexandria and Round Hill mails close at 8:40 a. m. and 4:00 p. m. Open at 9:00 a. m. and 3:30 p. m.

Chesapeake and Ohio mails close at 2:15 p. m. and 8:30 p. m. Open at 8:00 a. m. and 4:30 p. m.

Washington mails close at 7:30 and 11:45 a. m. and 2:50, 5:50, 8:30 p. m. Open at 8:00 a. m., 12:00 m. and 5:00 p. m.

Office Hours—Open at 9:00 a. m. Close at 6:00 p. m.

Sunday Hours—Open at 9:00 a. m. Close at 5:00 p. m.

Carriers' Schedule—Collections made on inside routes—6:30 and 10:00 a. m. and 3:00 and 5:30 p. m. Full route—6:30 a. m. and 5:30 p. m. Sunday collection—5:00 p. m. Collections made open Sunday 9:00 a. m. and close 9:30 a. m.

Deliveries made 8:00 a. m., 1:00 p. m., and 4:45 p. m.

All mail should be in office ten minutes before hour indicated for closing.

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